



Thomas A. Schatz  
*President*

December 13, 2004

The Honorable J. Dennis Hastert  
Speaker of the House  
The Capitol, Room H-232  
Washington, D.C. 20525

Dear Speaker Hastert,

As you know, when Congress returns, members will be voting on the rules package that will govern how the House conducts business. Recently, the Republican Study Committee (RSC) submitted its reform package. On behalf of the more than one million members and supporters of the Council for Citizens Against Government Waste (CCAGW), I ask that you and the House Republican leadership adopt the RSC's proposed rule changes for the 109th Congress. They are as follows:

1. Protect points of order by creating a separate point of order against any special rule waiving certain points of orders that limit spending, specifically sections 302(f), 303(a), and 311(a) of the Congressional Budget Act.
2. Remove current prohibitions restricting House floor references to the Senate or to a Senator's actions in order to encourage honest discussions of Congressional business.
3. Repeal the "Gephardt Rule" that provides for the automatic passage of a House joint resolution changing the public debt ceiling to conform with the budget.
4. Require every bill to be accompanied by a cost estimate.
5. Cap entitlements by creating a new supermajority (three-fifths) point of order against any increase in direct spending, except when applied to measures that would decrease the long-term unfunded obligation of entitlement programs.
6. Establish both a mandatory and a discretionary "Family Budget Protection Account" so that floor amendments can redirect spending toward deficit reduction or tax relief and force true savings by lowering a committee's 302(a) spending allocation.
7. Require an automatic roll call vote on any legislation that costs more \$50 million, including those being considered on the suspension calendar.

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8. Bills reported from a committee that either exceed the allowable amount of spending under the budget or fail to include a cost-estimate in the accompanying committee report would be automatically referred to the Budget Committee.
9. Require that any budget resolution reported from the House Budget Committee include a reserve fund for non-military emergency spending.
10. Revise staff floor privileges and allow full-time staff from a congressional member organization with more than 30 members to have floor access to be able to appropriately staff a member, even on procedural motions.

The President has set forth a bold agenda for 2005 and beyond with the most ambitious items being reforming Social Security and simplifying the tax code. These two measures will require tough decision-making and real fiscal discipline to have any hope of being implemented. The rules changes suggested by the RSC will help the 109th Congress accomplish these monumental tasks.

If the 109th Congress is successful in reducing spending and enacting Social Security and tax reform into law, you will leave behind an outstanding legacy, instead of one that is remembered for overspending, deficits as far as the eye can see, and a horrendous fiscal burden for future generations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Thomas Schatz". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

cc:

The Honorable Roy Blunt  
The Honorable Chris Cox  
The Honorable Tom DeLay  
The Honorable David Dreier  
The Honorable Mike Pence  
The Honorable Deborah Pryce